

PRESS RELEASE**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CASSIA/TWIN FALLS AREA
FEDERAL LANDS PILOT PROJECT PROVIDED TO BLM,
FOREST SERVICE, AND CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION****CONTACT: Bob Maynard, Perkins Coie LLP (208) 343-3434**

Recommendations to implement a pilot project for more collaborative and effective management of intermingled federal lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management ("BLM") and Forest Service in southern Idaho have been provided to these two land management agencies and to the Idaho congressional delegation for their review and consideration. The recommendations are also available for public comment. The recommendations are for structuring a project for BLM and Forest Service administered lands located primarily in Twin Falls and Cassia Counties. The documents provided to the agencies and delegation—a recommendation report, draft map of the recommended project area, and a draft of legislation to facilitate project implementation—are available upon request from Bob Maynard at (208) 343-3434.

The recommendations are the work of W.H. Fawcett and Bob Maynard of Perkins Coie LLP, contractor consultants to the Idaho Department of Lands and Idaho Board of Land Commissioners regarding implementation of pilot projects recommended for consideration in a December 2000 report by the Idaho Federal Lands Task Force Working Group. The recommendations are a refinement of a draft proposal that was made available for public comment earlier this year, and which was discussed at a February 27, 2004 public meeting in Twin Falls, after an earlier December 16, 2003 scoping meeting. The recommended pilot project is designed to provide a collaborative, inclusive public participation framework to enhance and build upon ongoing BLM and Forest Service office co-location and other integration/coordination efforts in the Cassia-Twin Falls area. Central elements of the recommended project are:

- 1) The BLM and Forest Service should integrate management of federal lands in the project area under their existing "Service First" pilot authority. The two agencies should designate a single coordinating manager for both BLM and Forest Service administered lands.
- 2) A single collaborative resource advisory group, comprised of a representative set of stakeholders, should be established for both the Forest Service and BLM administered lands in the project area.

3) To the extent reasonably practicable, the two federal agencies should implement a unified set of land and resource management rules for both BLM and Forest Service administered lands in the project area.

The recommended pilot project does not involve any transfer of federal lands or decisionmaking authority from the BLM or Forest Service to anyone else.

The recommended project area remains unchanged from the previously distributed draft proposal. The recommended project area encompasses a total of about 1.3 million acres of federal lands south of the Snake River in Idaho, comprised of about 670,000 acres administered by the BLM Burley Field Office, and about 630,000 acres in the Minidoka Ranger District of the Sawtooth National Forest.

Written comments regarding the recommendations may be submitted to the attention of Bob Maynard at Perkins Coie LLP, 251 East Front Street, Suite 400, Boise ID 83702.